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## IONA.

By J. HUBAND SMITH, M.R.I.A.

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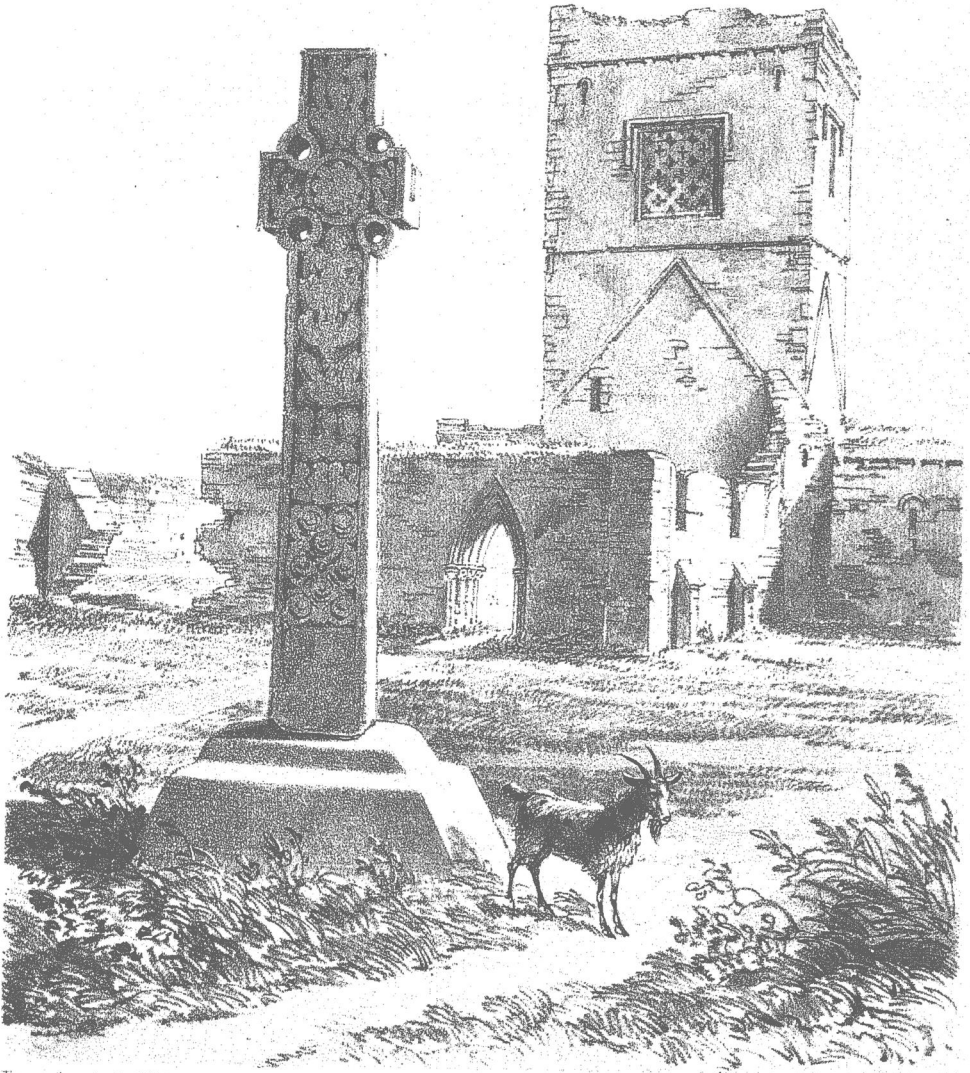
THE history of the island of Iona, from the period at which St. Columba landed upon it, and founded there his celebrated ecclesiastical establishment, in the sixth century, has been closely connected with that of Ireland, as our Annals abundantly show by the frequent notices of it which they furnish. Its secluded situation, and the difficulty of procuring accommodation for any prolonged stay, still present such obstacles to ordinary tourists, that few are tempted to remain longer than during the short time allowed by the periodical visits of the steamers in the summer months, which rarely exceed an hour. It will be easily conceived that this affords but brief opportunity for making one acquainted with the remains of the Cathedral, the church of St. Oran, and a few of the other more remarkable buildings, of a very considerable group, all of which, as well as many other objects on the island, well merit a more lengthened examination. The following notes were made a few years ago, after a sojourn of nearly a week in the hospitable house of one of the small landholders, who cheerfully afforded all the assistance in his power both as a host and a guide.

In the beginning of the 8th century, when venerable Bede wrote his history, this island was called simply *I*, or *Hy*, to which a pious regard for the memory of St. Columba added his name, thus giving it the appellation, since so well known, of *Hy-Columb-kille*. In the glossary of British antiquities of the learned William Baxter, we are told, that the name *Iona* is compounded of the Irish word *I*, and the Pictish *Onas*, both of which signify an island; and it is farther stated that in some dialects, *Onas* is used for *Inis*.

The account which venerable Bede gives of the time and manner in which St. Columba founded his ecclesiastical establishment in this island is as follows;—

“In the year of our Lord 565, there came into Britain a famous priest and abbot, a monk by habit and life, whose name was Columba, to preach the word of God to the provinces of the northern Picts.

“Columba came into Britain in the 9th year of the reign of Bricius, who was the son of Meilochon, and the powerful king of the Pictish nation, and he converted that nation to the faith of Christ by his preaching and example: whereupon he also received of them the aforesaid island for a monastery; for it is not very large, but about five miles in compass according to the English computation. His successors hold the island to this day. He was also buried therein, having died at the age of seventy-seven, about thirty-two years after he came into Britain to preach.”



From a drawing by J. Huband Smith.

Eng. & Del. E. H. B. & Co., London.

The general character of the island is wild and rocky, affording, however, excellent mountain pasture to numerous herds of cattle, and in some places exhibiting rich patches of arable ground, of small extent, but producing luxuriant crops. In the very highest spots it is said that, in digging through the peat, sand is invariably discovered; from which it may be presumed that the whole island was originally formed by the drifting of the sands into the space between the rocks.

The first considerable ruin which attracts attention, after passing the group of houses at the usual landing-place, is the Nunnery. The outer walls are massive, and enclose a chapel and burying-ground, in which are many monuments and tombs of considerable interest; some are elaborately ornamented, and bear inscriptions which record the names and virtues of several prioresses—of these a number have been engraved by Mr. H. D. Graham, in his “*Antiquities of Iona*,” published in 1850; but others, sculptured with patterns of great beauty, (having, however, no inscriptions,) have not hitherto been described.

The roof of the chapel existed in the memory of several persons now living, and Pennant speaks of it as being entire when he visited Iona in 1769. It is not long since the floor of the chapel was cleaned from an accumulation of fragments of the ruin, clay, and other matter to the depth of three or four feet, left by the cattle to which the building had been long abandoned; and then appeared the tombstones with which the floor is so thickly spread. The windows of this building are lofty, narrow, and round-headed; splaying widely internally. A very curious square-headed doorway leads from the chapel into a small vaulted sacristy:—its height is six feet and nine inches, and its width about three feet. This small chamber is lighted by a small window having a triangular head, much resembling others which may be noticed in some of the older portions of the cathedral. A paved road, or causeway, of great antiquity, is observable, leading from the Nunnery towards the Cathedral; its direction is followed, for the most part, by the very narrow pathway which leads to the church of St. Oran.—Two of these causeways are still distinctly traceable in the neighbourhood of the Nunnery. One of them is known by the name of *Straid-na-marbh*, or “the road of the dead,” and extends from a low mound called *Ellaidh*, which stands close to the shore about a hundred yards to the southward of the usual place of landing at *Port-Ronan*. Another smaller landing place near this mound is still called *Port-na-marbh*, and here the mortal remains of those who are conveyed from the neighbouring lands for interment in Iona, are invariably brought a-shore, and are deposited on the mound, while the mourners and friends form the order of the funeral procession. The second causeway is of greater breadth and size, and leads up directly from Port Ronan, where about twenty great stepping stones have, from a remote period, served the purposes of a rude boat quay. Tradition states that they were originally brought from the opposite shore of Mull; they are of red granite, of which, it is said, no trace is to be found in the island of Iona. This greater causeway runs nearly parallel, for a considerable distance, with the *Straid-na-marbh*, and is said to have been continued to the great western door of the Cathedral.

It has been stated, but upon uncertain authority, that so many as three hundred and sixty crosses

were standing in Iona, at the time of the Reformation:—of these, however, two only remain erect.—The smaller one, known as ‘Maclean’s cross,’ stands at the side of the narrow road leading from the nunnery to the burying-ground called the *Reilig Orain*. The shaft measures ten feet four inches above a base of masonry of about three feet in height. This cross is formed of thin slate, two inches and three quarters in thickness; it is covered with sculptured knots, and interlaced patterns, whose delicacy and beauty of design are yet discernible, though much time-worn. The circle, which occupies the intersection of the shaft and arms, encloses a quatre-foil, within which is the figure of our Saviour. The shaft, which is sixteen inches in breadth at the bottom, tapers upwards, till it is but ten inches across where its arms project. The present breadth across the arms is twenty-six inches; but at the end of each there is a groove, resembling a mortice, designed to admit a tenon, to hold, it would seem, an additional piece, in order to elongate the arms: and a similar groove or mortice is observable also in the arms of the great cross, call’d ‘St. Martin’s,’\* near the Cathedral. The base appears to have consisted of three or more steps, the top being formed of a thin flag, into which the shaft is inserted.

Not far beyond Maclean’s cross stands the church of St. Oran, which, there can be little doubt, is the most ancient structure now existing upon the island; it is within the burying ground called the *Reilig Orain*. The manner in which this cemetery obtained its name is thus stated in a note to the life of St. Columba, by Dr. Smith, of Campbelton, who cites the ancient Irish memoir by Manus O’Donnell as his authority. “St. Oran, one of the twelve who first accompanied Columba from Ireland, ‘finding himself unwell soon after he landed, expressed his desire ‘that his soul might soon be with ‘Christ, and his body the first pledge that should consecrate Iona to his companions.’ ‘My dear Oran,’ ‘said Columba ‘shall have both his wishes, and they who shall hereafter ask for my tomb, shall next ‘enquire where is Oran’s.’ Accordingly *Reilig Orain* is still shown to strangers.’”

Perhaps the earliest published description of the *Reilig Orain* is that given by Munro, Dean of the Isles, who wrote in 1549. He says: “within this isle of Kilmkill there is ane sanctuary also, “or Kirk-zaird, callit in Erishe *Relig Orain*, quhilk is a very fair kirk-zaird, and well biggit about

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\* EDITORS’ NOTE.—In an account of a visit to Iona by an American Clergyman, published in 1840, it is mentioned that, a short time previously, in raising St. Martin’s Cross from its fallen position, a small *gold spoon* was found underneath it. At the recent Exhibition of Irish Antiquities in the Belfast Museum, (during the visit of the British Association,) among other objects found lately in the Lower Bunn, during the Engineering operations going forward in that river under the direction of C. S. Otley, Esq., C. E., that gentleman sent for exhibition a small *gold spoon* of peculiar form. The annexed wood-cut is an accurate representation of it.



With the view of ascertaining whether the spoon found in Iona was similar, an inquiry was addressed to the Rev. D. M’Vean, residing on the island. In reply he writes:—“The spoon you refer to, as found, some years ago, under St. Martin’s Cross, and which is in the possession of the Duke of Argyle, was quite plain, of an oval figure, and very shallow; the length was about four inches. It was not gold, but of a sort of bronze or copper-like metal. I am sorry I can give you no further particulars regarding it.” There is no doubt that these spoons were used in Roman Catholic rites; a dignitary of that church having informed the editors that, at a former period, in these countries, such spoons were employed to mix a single drop of water with the sacramental wine. The author of the “Visit to Iona,” above alluded to, mentions, that “he had often seen the priests in Greece administer the Communion, the bread and wine and water mingled together, from such a spoon.”

“with stane and lime. Into this sanctuary there are three tombes of staine, formed like little chapels, with ane braide grey marble or quhin stane in the gairth of ilk ane of the tombes. In the staine of the ane tombe there is written in Latin letters *Tumulus Regum Scotie*, that is the tombe or grave of the Scottes Kings. Within this tombe, according to our Scottes and Erishe cronikles ther laye forty-eight crowned Scotts kings, through the quhilk this isle has been richly dotat be the Scotts kings, as we have said. The tombe on the south side forsaide hes this inscription, *Tumulus Regum Hibernie*; that is, the tombe of the Irland kinges: for we have in our old Erishe cronikles that ther were four Irland kinges erdit in the said tombe. Upon the North syde of our Scotts tombe the inscription bears *Tumulus Regum Norwegice*; that is, the tombe of the Kinges of Norroway.”

“Within the sanctuary also lye the the maist pairt of the Lords of the Isles, with ther lynage; twa Clan Leans with ther lynage; M’Kynnon and M’Quarie with ther lynage; with sundrie other inhabitants of the hail isles: because this sanctuary was wont to be the sepulture of the best men of all the isles, and also of our kinges as we have said.”

This remarkable description has been either quoted or alluded to in almost every account of Iona since Munro’s time. Pennant, in his tour, says he was very desirous of viewing the tombs of the kinges described by the Dean of the Isles. He could discover nothing more than certain slight remains that were built in a rugged form, and arched within, but the inscriptions were lost. “These,” he adds “are called *Iomaire nan Righ*, or the ridge of the kinges.”

In the year 1833 the society called the Iona Club was formed for the investigation and illustration of the History, Antiquities, and early literature of the Highlands of Scotland, and held its first meeting upon the Island of Iona in the month of September, in that year. In the 1st volume of their Transactions they state that the result of excavations, made by them in the Reilig Orain, proved the fallacy of a notion generally entertained, that there were subterraneous vaults or chambers in that part of the cemetery where the tombs of the kinges are said to lie. In one word, these tombs no longer exist, and it seems most probable that they must have resembled those sepulchres of a more architectural character, of which a few examples yet remain in Ireland, erected to contain the mouldering remains of distinguished persons; they correspond in form (though of course on a reduced scale) to the earliest Christian churches or oratories. Those which still exist, in a tolerable state of preservation, are the tombs of St Cadan, at the church of Tamlaght Ard;—that of Muireadach O’Heney, near the church of Banagher;—and the tomb of St Ringan, the founder or patron of the church of Bovevagh;—all of which are situated in the county of Londonderry. Remains of similar tombs are found in other parts of Ireland, some of which appear to have been of greater size and importance, but they are usually in a state of great dilapidation.

That the Reilig Orain is the last resting-place of many distinguished kinges, chiefs, and ecclesiastics, is evident from the numerous tomb-stones, of every class and period, from the seventh century down to the present day, with which the cemetery is thickly covered. The excavations of the Iona club

brought to view many of those tomb-stones, which the lapse of time, and accumulation of earth and rubbish, had concealed. A considerable number of richly sculptured stones were thus exposed for the first time for many years, which had never before been seen by any one then living; and were placed on the surface of the cemetery. Very many fragments of stone crosses, of considerable size and beauty, are still to be seen used chiefly as head-stones; yet judging from those remains, the statement that three hundred and sixty crosses were once standing here seems exceedingly questionable. It appears to have received currency from a passage in Sir Walter Scott's diary written in 1814;—and is said to rest upon the authority of a M.S. description of Iona, written in 1698, and preserved in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh. In a little account of Iona, published by L. Maclean in 1841, he states that an Act of the Convention of Estates was passed at the desire of the Church of Scotland in the year 1561, 'for demolishing all the Abbeyes of monks and friars, and for suppressing whatsoever monuments of idolatry were remaining in the realm.' In consequence of this edict a pitiful devastation of churches and monasteries ensued; and at this time many of the crosses which adorned Iona were destroyed or carried away.

William Sacheverell, governor of the Isle of Man, who was employed, in 1688, in the attempt to recover the stores of the "Florida," 'one of the great vessels of the Spanish Armada, which was blown up and sunk in the harbour of Tobermory, in Mull,' has left, in a letter dated the 7th of September in that year, an account of I-columb-kill, in which he states that "the Synod of Argyll ordered *sixty* crosses to be cast into the sea." Judging from the fragments which remain, and all other probabilities, it seems more than likely that, by the accidental prefix of a single figure, some hasty transcription of the original account may have added 300 to the 60 spoken of by Sacheverell.

The church of St. Oran stands, within the Reilig Orain, by compass N.W. and S.E. Its most remarkable feature is the great doorway, its only entrance; and which, allowing for its age, is still in a remarkably perfect state. Its height is seven feet and eight inches. It is surmounted by a round arch, or rather by three concentric arches, each richly ornamented with a series of sculptured ornaments, which are, however, so much time-worn that it is now, in some degree, conjectural what they were intended to represent. The inner arch appears to contain the rudiment of the beautiful toothed ornament of a later period; the central one a series of heads of animals; while the external or largest of the three seems decorated with human heads. The number of stones forming the inner arch is eleven; those of the central are seventeen; and of the external arch twenty-two. These three arches diminish gradually in breadth: the inner one being eight inches in depth, while the largest is but six. These arches are supported by slender columns of the simplest form; the distance between the outer ones being five feet, narrowing to three feet nine inches between the inner columns. On the outside of the church, at the left hand of the door, is a small recess, about eighteen inches square, which seems intended to hold a vase for holy-water. The building itself, is in form, a simple parallelogram, and measures in length, externally, 35 feet; and in breadth, 20 feet and 8 inches. Internally, its length is 29 feet and 8 inches, and its breadth 15 feet and 10 inches. The height of the side walls, to the

under edge of the eave course, is 11 feet and 2 inches. There are but two small windows; one in the northern, and the other in the southern wall, at the upper end of the church: they open upon the place where the altar once stood; of which, however, no trace now remains. The window in the northern wall is twenty-six inches in height, about seven in breadth, and is five feet from the ground; it is round-headed, and has a slight moulding marked on the outside. The window in the southern wall is four feet in height, lancet-shaped, and triangular-headed. The original open of both these windows was probably six inches only; internally they are splayed to a breadth of three feet four inches. There was no window nor opening of any kind in the eastern gable.

Within the area of the church are many tomb-stones of a highly interesting character; they are chiefly those of Highland chiefs, of the 15th and 16th centuries, with others of a later period. Similarly sculptured stones, having a figure in low relief, wearing a pointed helmet and shirt of mail, and the hands resting on a broad-sword, are to be seen in many church yards in the west of Scotland; as, for example, at the ruined church upon the beautiful little island of Inishail, in Loch Awe, and others also at Dalmally. On the right hand of the door-way is a canopied recess in the thickness of the side-wall, surmounted by a wide triple arch of elegant design. The altar-tomb, which it once contained, has disappeared, and in its place lies a portion of the shaft of a cross, the head of which is wanting, but the inscription, within one of its compartments, is fortunately perfect, and runs thus:—

HEC EST CRUX LACCLANNI MAIO FINGONÆ ET EJUS FILII JOHANNIS ABBATIS DE HY. FACTA ANNO  
DOMINI M.CCCC. LXXX. IX.

Sacheverell, who has been already mentioned, writing in 1688, says, he was informed by “the Dean of the Isles, Mr. Frazer, an honest episcopal minister, that his father “who had also been Dean of the Isles, left him a book with above three hundred inscriptions, which he had lent to the “late Earl of Argyle,” but he adds a sad conjecture that “they were all lost by that great man’s “afflictions.”

Two grave-stones, which bear inscriptions in the Irish character, have attracted the attention of almost every one who has visited Iona; and various interpretations have been offered, but all more or less incorrect. Pennant, Maclean, Benjamin Motte, H. D. Graham, and lastly Dr. Daniel Wilson in his “Archæology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland” have all suggested translations, and attributed these monuments to different individuals. The first of these inscriptions records little more than the name of Eogain, or Owen, thus:

OR AR anmin EOΓAIN

The first word is the contracted form of OROIT, equivalent to the Latin word ORATIO, a *prayer*; the second word signifies *upon*; the third, ANMIN, is the cognate to ANIMA, the *soul*. The whole is therefore to be translated

A PRAYER FOR, OR UPON; THE SOUL OF EOΓAIN, OR OWEN.



The second grave-stone has the following inscription :—

+ O̅R DO MAELPATRIC

A PRAYER FOR MAELPATRICK.

This inscription gives a proper name very common in Irish history, and which may be rendered 'the tonsured servant of Patrick.' The first part of this name is to be found in many others, as, for example, Maelbrigid, and Maelcolum, or Malcolm; and a remarkable instance occurs in the original autograph of the transcriber of part of the Book of Armagh written by Mael Suthain, the secretary, as he has been styled, of the celebrated Brian Boru, who flourished in the 11th century. The autograph is followed by a translation in the Latin language, but in the Irish character, in the hand-writing of the individual himself, thus: "*I Calvus Perennis*, wrote this in the sight of Brian." \* \* \* \* \*

As to the individual over whose remains this stone was placed, a strong presumption, at least, may be deduced from an entry in the Annals of the Four Masters, at the year 1174, where it is recorded, that "Malpatrick O'Banan, Bishop of Connor and Dal-Araidhe, a venerable man, full of sanctity, meekness and purity of heart, died happily in Hy of Columbkille, at a good old age." He was evidently a personage of some importance, for his name appears among those of the subscribing Bishops to the acts of the famous Council of Kells, held in the year 1152, where Gillachrist, Bishop of Lismore, presided in the capacity of Legate, and the two additional palls were conferred on Dublin and Tuam.

In Scotland the Archæologists seem still to be at issue with regard to these two inscriptions. The latest notice of them occurs in a communication made on the 10th of May 1852, by Mr. W. F. Skene, a gentleman of the highest attainments, and who has been long known as a person of the most accurate research, to the Society of Antiquaries in Edinburgh. It is entitled generally, on "Ancient inscribed Scottish monuments," and was published in the Proceedings of the Society, vol. i. part i. page 81. The first of these inscriptions he concurs with Dr. D. Wilson (Prehistoric Annals, page 507,) in reading thus :—

O̅R AR ARMIN EOȜAIN

and translates it,

A PRAYER FOR ARMIN EWEN.

Mr. Skene proceeds to say that the word "ARMIN means a hero, or chief," and cites, in confirmation of this reading, a passage in the Annals of the Four Masters, at the year 1103. In a note, however, he intimates that "the second letter of the third word may be read either R, or N," and in the latter case the word would be more properly read

anmin

ANMIN, ANIMA, the soul; and he concludes, "should this word be found on other similar inscriptions, it is *probably* the best reading."

The conjecture, thus merely hazarded, is however placed beyond a doubt by a comparison with similar inscriptions met with very often in Ireland, and it will be, perhaps, deemed sufficient to cite four. Two of them occur on gravestones in the cathedral of Lismore, and were lithographed for Mr. Windele, of Cork, in 1849. They read as follows:

## ðendacht for anmain colgen

A BLESSING ON THE SOUL OF COLGAN.

## ðendacht for ān martan

A BLESSING ON THE SOUL OF MARTIN.

Two others were found by the Rev. James Graves, of Kilkenny, in the church-yard of Kilkenny, in the county of Kilkenny, and are copied from tracings made by him: they appear to have been commemorative of two individuals of the same name, which is one of some celebrity in the history of early Christian times. The first of them reads thus:

## ŌR AR ANMIN AEDĀEN

The second runs in nearly the same words, with a slight variation in the spelling, thus:

## ŌR AR ANMAINN AEDAIN

and they may be similarly translated,

A PRAYER FOR THE SOUL OF AIDAN

It is to be presumed that these examples, (and others doubtless exist which have not yet been noticed,) will suffice to establish the true reading of the much controverted inscription at Iona.

A little to the north of the Reilig Orain stands the Cathedral, which covers the greatest extent, and is the most conspicuous of the various groups of ruins in Iona. The great Tower, which is placed at the intersection of the Nave and Choir, with the Transepts, catches the attention from every point of view. At once massive and elegant, simple in its general form, yet not wanting in the decoration of its details, it may well be a matter of pride to Ireland that an inscription on the upper portion of one of the supporting columns exhibits the name of an Irish ecclesiastic as its builder, in these words:

DONALDUS OBROLCHAN FECIT HOC OPS.

He was doubtless of the family of Flahertach O'Brolchain whose name is found recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters at the year 1175, as *coarb*, or successor of Columbkille, "to whom, for his wisdom and great virtues, the clergy of Ireland had given a bishop's chair, and offered the superintendence of the monastery of Iona." The lithographic illustration of this paper shows the general aspect of this fine square Tower, and the Cathedral, as seen from the west, with the great Cross of St. Martin in the foreground.

Notwithstanding that the Cathedral, and the group of buildings which surround it, have always attracted the chief attention of those who have visited Iona, there are many most interesting and

characteristic features which have escaped observation. The very striking and picturesque effect of this noble pile ever fill the mind with a solemn pleasure when viewed with a just feeling. Upon a closer examination it will be found to consist of portions of greatly varying interest and antiquity. While the great tower and perhaps the larger portion of the nave, and aisles, are probably the erections of the 12th and next succeeding century, many parts of the ruins must be referred to a still more remote period. To distinguish these from each other would require greater space than can be devoted to a detailed inquiry in these pages. Numerous and careful drawings, also, would be required in order to make any description available, and after all would fail to supply the want of a close personal inspection of the architectural characteristics of the various parts. It will be sufficient, for the purposes of this brief notice, to pass on to a general view of the most striking features which present themselves.

Entering the Cathedral by the great western door,—a lofty pointed arch, of the most elegant proportions, and consisting of four members,—the general plan of the building is at once perceived to be cruciform. It consists of Nave, Transepts, and Choir, with Aisles at the sides. It is, however, obvious that many of its minor features arose from various departures from the original design, and were made, chiefly by way of additions, at different and very distant periods.

The Nave measures 64 feet in length, by 23 feet and 6 inches in breadth. A considerable portion of its northern wall has long since fallen; the southern still stands, and contains the remains of three lofty windows of a very simple form. The northern wall is curiously projected so as to form a little chamber; which, it may be conjectured, was intended for the apartment of a porter, who through a narrow serrated slit which it contains, could command a view of persons at the outside of the great western door. At the eastern end of the nave rises the great tower, the arch beneath which has been built up to the top; a small space only being left for a modern door.

This noble square tower forms a most conspicuous object from a distance, and is not only the most prominent and important feature in these ruins, but fortunately continues in a much more perfect state of preservation than any other part. Its ground plan, on being measured, is found not to form an exact square, but measures 22 feet lengthways, while it is 26 feet and six inches across. Like every other part of the building, it is now unroofed, and can only be ascended to scarce one third of its entire height, which is said to be altogether about ninety feet. It stands upon four lofty pointed arches, supported by clustered columns, which lead respectively into the Nave, the Choir or Chancel and the northern or southern Transepts. Of these arches, the northern is evidently richer in its details than the southern. It presents below a cluster of seven members, from which above spring five; while, in the southern, there are but three members springing from a cluster of seven. At the top the tower is lighted by four beautiful square windows, one at each side. They are formed of quatrefoils, wrought in stone-work, and each window is supported within by a single baluster, producing a singularly fine effect. They all are distinct in form and details, yet harmonize with each other. Indeed throughout the entire of this interesting building there is perhaps no feature more worthy of

of especial note than the elegant differences, in various instances more or less remote, which, upon examination, are found to exist between every corresponding window, column, capital, arch, and other minor detail and decoration; exhibiting the profound skill and power of design possessed by the architect, who, as it were, disdained to copy or repeat himself.

The Chancel is, as nearly as possible, of the same extent in length and breadth as the Nave. The eastern window is still tolerably perfect, and of an early Gothic style. The arches on each side rest on massive circular columns, with sculptured capitals. On the northern side, the spaces between the arches have been built up. The clerestory windows above are narrow, and have tre-foiled heads. Of these there are five; two in the northern wall, and three in the southern; and, though differing from each other, they present a sufficient degree of general uniformity to ensure perfect harmony in general effect.

The open arches on the southern side of the Choir, running up to the place where it is presumed the stone pulpit once stood, give a light and beautiful effect to the whole structure. At the upper end are the recessed sedilia, which are surmounted by tre-foiled arches, having sculptured heads above; that next the high altar wears a mitre. The seats, as usual, are raised a little one above the other, as they approach the altar. Between the two higher seats a crowned head appears. The windows at the side of the altar are of an ornamental character, and are nearly pure Gothic in the style of their tracery. The mullions of the eastern window are much corroded by decay in their upper portions, which gives them a singularly picturesque effect. In the north wall two arches are visible, whose bases are at a considerable height from the ground. The round-headed door-way already spoken of, is placed beneath one of those arches, but by no means in the centre; from which it may be concluded that it did not form a part of the original design. These arches are closed up with solid masonry, which, it is quite evident, was done at some remote period. Corresponding with the tops of the clerestory windows, but a little below them, is a row of corbels, simply but not inelegantly carved, and of similar designs to others to be found in the great tower; these supported the wood-work of the roof, which was doubtless of a perpendicular character, the corbels being lower than the tops of the clerestory windows. That the roof must have been of wood is manifest from the fact that no provision was made for the support of the weight of stone vaulting, to cover the breadth of the Choir. The great altar stood upon a large dais, nearly extending across the whole breadth of the Chancel.

The southern transept is remarkably simple and unornamented; its only feature worthy of particular notice, being the round arch leading into the southern aisle, and a large pointed window in the south wall, the mullions and tracery of which have disappeared. Along the eastern side of the northern transept are three round recessed arches, of a remarkably ancient form; the centre one, which is the smallest, surmounts a niche, which once contained a statue of a saint or ecclesiastic, but of which the feet, and a portion of the lower drapery alone remain. The others open into deep closet-shaped recesses, having windows corresponding to the arches, and opening eastwards into an interspace between portions of the building. The northern wall of this transept has been

long wholly prostrate; the western wall separates it from the cloisters, with which it communicated by a low pointed door-way, the fragments of which still lie about; it having but recently fallen down.

On the south side of the Chancel an aisle extends to within about fifteen feet of its eastern end, where it is terminated by a pointed window; while, to the north, an apartment, nine paces by four, is found in a position corresponding to the southern aisle, formed by two buttressed walls, and communicating with the Chancel by a round-headed door-way, supported by sculptured columns with massive capitals. These are decorated with foliated ornaments, some figures of animals, (one of them a boar,) and interlaced vine-leaves, in low relief. The outer columns are squared, and each bore a couchant human figure, supporting on his shoulders the superincumbent ornament: one of these is nearly obliterated, while the other is perfect, excepting the head. Above these columns rises a semicircular arch, with its mouldings; while on those of the door-case within it rests a beautiful trefoil arch, the effect of which beneath is singularly striking and elegant in general form, as well as in its details. Nearly opposite to this door-way is a base of massive masonry, which probably supported a stone pulpit. The side chapel, or sacristy, contains a 'piscina' of carved sandstone, the same material in which the mullions of the windows, and various other parts of the ornamental work of the Cathedral, are executed. It has also a recessed space for an 'aumbry;' and is lighted by four widely splayed windows, none of which are symmetrical either in form or place. Two of these are in the south-eastern wall, one above the other; the upper one is very small, but opens widely within by a bold splay above and below, as well as laterally. The mouldings on the inner surface of the wall are triple, and contain a bold bead-ornament between the outer moulding, and that next to it. The form of this upper window is rectilinear; the upper part terminating in a triangular head. The lower window is similarly splayed, and square in form. A third window was placed opposite to the door-way, between the 'aumbry' and the centre of the sacristy, and is now in a ruined state. The fourth window is placed higher up in the north-western wall; its form is square, of small dimensions, and devoid of ornament; and, as it exhibits no mark of decay, it would seem to be of more recent date than the others.

The great aisle on the southern side of the Cathedral, extending nearly the whole length of the chancel, opens into the transept by a massive and plainly moulded round arch, supported on the left by a low round column with a richly decorated capital, while that on the right is square and devoid of enrichment, being little more than the edge of the wall dressed with a chamfered edge: on this, at a height of about three feet above the ground, a small cross is sculptured within a circle.—Crosses of a similar form occur sometimes in the external walls of churches and cathedrals, as, for instance, in that at Salisbury. Another is to be seen at one side of the beautiful door-way of the church of Freshford, in the county of Kilkenny, engraved in Dr. Petrie's essay on ancient Irish Ecclesiastical Architecture. They were occasionally inlaid with metal, and have been supposed to mark the spots which were anointed with 'chrism' at the dedication of the building.

One half of the capital of the transept column, (already alluded to as on the left of the arch,) is

foliated and divided into compartments; while the remainder, which looks towards the aisle, bears a sculptured representation of the expulsion of our first parents from Paradise, by an angel holding a drawn sword. A cable-moulding runs beneath the decorations of this capital, which is repeated on the other columns supporting the side arches on the south of the Chancel: while from the transept columns it is continued upwards vertically till it meets a plain moulding surrounding the loftier clustered column of the great transept arch which terminates the Chancel.

The aisle is formed of three massive buttress walls, sloping to the ground externally. At the eastern wall is a pointed window of admirable proportions; and two inner walls form segments, apparently massy quadrants of great circles, which abut against the outer moulding of the Chancel arches, and repose on the capital or 'archivolt' of the great circular columns. The remains of five windows are still visible in this aisle. Of these, three were placed between the buttresses, and must have been of a large size:—a fourth, much smaller, is close to the end on the south side;—the last, which is placed at the eastern, or rather the south-eastern end, is the noble pointed window, already mentioned, which yet exists in a tolerably perfect state. It has a massive central mullion, and triple head, the centre of which is so disposed as to exhibit a cross of a very beautiful form. The entire stone-work of this fine window, although most elaborately wrought, is yet remarkably massive in proportion to its height. It may be safely stated to be a very superior example of the pointed style, in which the general beauty of effect is produced rather by the proportions of the stone-work, than by the glass, however beautiful, which it may once have contained. It seems worthy of note that this window, as seen from the transept, is in a great degree hidden by the arched buttresses, which leave but about two-thirds of its height visible.

There are traces of various minor buildings surrounding the Cathedral, some connected with it, others detached, though close at hand; and many more may be traced, by their foundations, at short distances. Some of them are still popularly distinguished by such names as "the Bishop's house;" others have indications of their ecclesiastical character, and one at least may be safely presumed to have been a small church.

It has already been intimated that much remains to be told of Iona, its exquisite natural beauties, and its antiquities, which belong to a period even antecedent to the Christian era; much, also, of its subsequent and archæological associations, as well as its ecclesiastical ruins, of which but a brief and imperfect notice has been given in these pages. A curious circumstance has yet, in conclusion, to be noticed:—it is this. Among the inhabitants of this sequestered islet a constant and unbroken tradition exists to the present day, derived, as they uniformly tell, from the earliest Christian period, that Iona will, in process of time, be restored to its pristine greatness, and resume the distinguished position it once held as the great luminary of the western world. In confirmation of this tradition it may be observed that Pen-

nant, writing in the middle of the last century, records the following Gaelic prophetic Rann or verse :—

“Seachd bliadhna roimh an bhrath,  
Thig muir thair Eirín ri aon trath,  
Is thair Ìla ghuirm ghlaís;  
Ach snamhaidh I Cholum claraich.”

which he thus translates :

“Seven years before the end of the world,  
A deluge shall drown the nations.  
The sea, at one tide, shall cover Ireland,  
And the green-headed Islay; but Columba's isle  
Shall swim above the flood.”

—and a still more exact embodiment of this vivid and remarkable tradition is frequently recited in the island, having survived, in a singular manner, the entire change produced, by the effects of time, in its population and religious creed. It is given first in Gaelic, and afterwards translated in the following words, by Mr. H. D. Graham, in his ‘Antiquities of Iona’ :—

I mo chridhe, I mo ghràidh,  
An aite guth manaigh bithidh geum ba,  
Ach mun tig an saoghal gu crìch,  
Bithidh I mar a bha.

The isle of my heart, the isle of my love,  
Instead of a monk's voice shall be the lowing of cattle,  
But before the world comes to an end  
Iona shall flourish as before.